

## Agencies and Organizations Assisting Farmers

### MAINE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL RESOURCES

28 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333  
207-287-3871

#### "get real. get maine!"

a promotional branding campaign, to increase public awareness of Maine products, **Division of Market and Production Development, 287-3491**

#### Farmland Protection Program, 287-7520

#### Ag Business Planning Assistance

- **Farms for the Future**, administered jointly with Coastal Enterprises Inc., provides farmers grants to develop and implement business plans. **Dept. 287-7520** and **287-7620, CEI 772-5356**
- **NxLevel Business Planning**, coordinated by NRCS Heart of Maine Resource Conservation and Development Council, 368-4433
- **Food and Farms Resource Guide**—*Handbook for Maine Agricultural Businesses* provides farmers information on various agricultural subjects and programs, **287-3491**

#### Ag Business Loans and Grants

- Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund
- Potato Marketing Improvement Fund
- Agricultural Development Grant
- Agricultural Technical Assistance Grant Program
- Agricultural Water Source Development Cost Share Program

#### MAINE FARM BUREAU

A non-governmental, voluntary organization whose mission it is to analyze economic and public problems surrounding agriculture in Maine. Augusta, **622-4111**

#### MAINE FARM CREDIT

Specializes in lending to Maine's agricultural, fishing and forest products industries. Aroostook Regional Office, Presque Isle, **764-6431**; or Southern Regional Office, Auburn, **784-0193**

### MAINE FARMLAND TRUST

A membership-based, non-profit organization working in the public's interest to protect Maine's precious farmland resources. Bucksport, **469-6465**

### MAINE FARMLINK

A farm transfer program that connects farmers seeking farmland with retiring Maine farmers and farm owners who wish to see their agricultural lands remain active. Currently there are 35 prospective sellers and 67 prospective buyers statewide with 6 prospects in Aroostook County. Freedom, **382-3255**

### MAINE ORGANIC FARMERS AND GARDENERS ASSOCIATION (MOFGA)

Developed from a loose affiliation of farmers and gardeners committed to growing healthy, chemical free food, to an internationally recognized advocate for food production that enhances and protects the ecological as well as economic vitality of rural communities. Unity, **568-4142**

### MAINE WOMEN'S AGRICULTURAL NETWORK

A collaborative effort of farmers, agriculture and related non-profit, for profit and governmental agencies seeking to help women and other underserved individuals find the skills necessary to begin or continue farming profitably. Lisbon Falls, **800-287-1458**

### SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Assists farmers, landowners and communities with conserving and protecting natural resources. Each District works in partnership with the **USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), USDA Farm Service Agency** and other federal, state and local agencies, including the **NRCS-Resource Conservation and Development Council**. Fort Kent **800-287-1421**; Presque Isle **800-287-1462**; Houlton **800-287-1469**; statewide **800-287-0274**

### UNIVERSITY OF MAINE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

A major educational outreach program of the University of Maine, with offices statewide. Fort Kent **800-287-1421**; Presque Isle **800-287-1462**; Houlton **800-287-1469**; or statewide **800-287-0274**.

## Web Links

United States Department of Agriculture  
**www.usda.gov**

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)  
**www.nrcs.usda.gov**

Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources  
**www.maine.gov/argiculture/**

"get real. get maine!"  
**www.getrealmaine.com**

Maine State Web Portal  
**www.maine.gov**

Maine Food and Farms Resource Guide  
**www.getrealmaine.com/connect/**

## References

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service  
USDA Farm Service Agency  
Maine Revenue Service

# Aroostook County



## 2003-2004 COUNTY PROFILE OF MAINE AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

Maine's agricultural future is inextricably linked to its ability to continue to build strong, long-lasting connections between farmers and the communities they serve. To help all citizens better understand how agriculture is connected to every aspect of life in Maine, this county profile provides citizens, community planners and natural resource conservation groups important facts about farmers, farms, farmland and agricultural enterprises in Aroostook County.

### Farmers in Aroostook County



	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
Farming as Principal Occupation	1,241	1,055	920	647	530
Male Operators (N)	NA	1,341	1,222	852	839
Female Operators (N)	NA	27	31	32	50
Average Age	49	47	47	49	52

*\*USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*

Statewide, farming has a unique connection to the history of Maine. Farmers are stewards of the land; well-managed farmland protects natural resources and creates beautiful open space. Many of Maine's first settlers were farmers whose fields, farmhouses and barns shaped Maine's historic landscape. Today, Maine's agricultural producers and processors annually contribute over 1.2 billion dollars to Maine's economy and employ 65,000 Maine people!

### Aroostook County Farmland

	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
Number of Farms	1,561	1,368	1,253	884	889
Total Acres	448,090	420,086	385,828	334,040	324,887
Average Farm Size(A)	287	307	308	378	365
Total Cropland (A)	240,862	232,428	203,750	189,850	187,599
Total Pasture (A)	NA	38,756	40,161	30,400	26,798
Total Orchard (A)	20	28	43	55	62
Total Hay (A)	20,378	21,533	20,921	16,302	21,795
Total Woodland (A)	160,508	152,607	139,645	114,744	108,490

*\*USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*

*Land in farms decreased 3 percent from 334,040 acres in 1992 to 324,887 acres in 1997.*



November  
2003



Unique to Aroostook County

- There are 7 granges in Aroostook County. **County Grange**, Leland Potter, Master, 448-2465.
- County Chapter of the **Maine Farm Bureau**, Dan LaPointe, President, Van Buren 868-5707
- **Crown O'Maine Organic Cooperative**, Madawaska, Jim Cook 1-800-743-7783
- **Maine Agricultural Bargaining Council**, Presque Isle, Vernon DeLong 764-3380
- **Maine Potato Growers**, Presque Isle, Joseph Lallande 764-3131
- **Maine Potato Board** – www.mainepotato.com
- **Land Trust Organizations**  
*Upper St. John Land Trust*, founded in 1991, works cooperatively with landowners to protect the natural resources of local, state and federal importance; and further local awareness of conservation of the region's natural resources, 834-2880.
- The **State Historic Preservation Office** (287-2132) and **Maine Preservation** (775-7737) have information regarding the county's agriculturally related places of historic and cultural significance.

Farmland Protected in Aroostook County

TEMPORARILY PROTECTED

Maine Dept. of Agriculture

- 2,545 acres protected through Farms for the Future (5 years)

USDA Farm Service Agency

- Protected through Conservation Reserve Program (10-15 years): Houlton 6,310 acres; Presque Isle 5,675 acres; Fort Kent 11,481 acres
- 3,641 acres protected through Debt for Nature (50 years)

Enrolled in Farm and Open Space Tax Program

- 4,317 acres farmland in 2002 — 2,697 acres cropland plus 1,620 acres woodland
- 435 acres open space in 2001

Enrolled in Tree Growth Tax Program

- 669,126 acres in 2001

Prime Soils in Aroostook County

PRIME FARMLAND

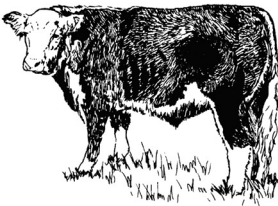
The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines prime farmland as the land that is best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce a sustained high yield of crops while using acceptable farming methods. Prime Farmland produces the highest yields and requires minimal amounts of energy and economic resources, and farming it results in the least damage to the environment. Prime Farmland is a limited strategic resource. No more of it is being created.

**Northeast Aroostook, 242,500 acres (estimated)**  
**Southern Aroostook, 64,666 acres (estimated)**

SOILS OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE

This is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide significance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land are to be determined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce a high yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable.

**Northeast Aroostook, 418,135 acres (estimated)**  
**Southern Aroostook, 111,169 acres (estimated)**



Food, Farms\* and Fairs in Aroostook County

- 59 Farmstands/Nurseries/Greenhouses open to the public
- 6 Farmers' Markets serving multiple communities
- 3 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farms contract directly with their customers, who pay a fixed price in advance for fresh produce throughout the season
- 9 Farms offer Pick Your Own fruits and vegetables
- 12 Farms host on farm special events and activities, such as pumpkin hunts, animal viewing, hayrides and school programs
- 2 Agricultural Fairs (Houlton Fair and Presque Isle Fair) drew up to 15, 500 people to Aroostook County in 2002

*\* Some farms may be counted in multiple categories. Not all farm activities and retail services are listed here.*



Annual Statewide Events and Programs in 2003

- 2 Aroostook County farms opened their sugarhouses for Maine Maple Sunday, held annually on the 4th Sunday in March.

- 3 Aroostook County farms welcomed the public on Open Farm Day, held on the 4th Sunday July.

- 3 Aroostook County restaurants participated in Maine Menus Month in October, making special efforts to feature Maine grown, raised or harvested ingredients on their menus.

Many farmers participated in Great Maine Apple Day at Highmoor Farm in early November to celebrate Maine's apple harvest.

- 21 Aroostook County farmers and 834 seniors participated in Maine Senior FarmShare, a program funded by the USDA, which provides locally grown produce to low-income seniors. Statewide, 185 farmers benefited from nearly \$900,000 in sales and additional seniors received fresh produce through food pantries and community meal sites.

*Statewide market research in 2002 showed 89 percent surveyed believe that buying locally grown food strengthens Maine's economy.*

Aroostook County Agricultural Sales

	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
All crops	\$101,670,000	\$66,645,000	\$82,210,000	\$117,665,000	\$104,685,000
Livestock/poultry and their products	\$3,802,000	\$4,602,000	\$5,202,000	\$5,123,000	\$4,934,000
Nursery and greenhouse products	\$177,000	\$173,000	\$197,000	\$405,000	\$1,886,000

*\*USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*